

Local Drug Reform Groups Host Defendant in Landmark Trial

WHAT: Two days of events including a public dialogue in a forum entitled "On the Front Lines of the Drug War: Medical Marijuana Activists" and a Know Your Rights workshop. Sponsored by the UIUC Chapters of NORML (National Organization for the Reform of Marijuana Laws) and SSDP (Students for Sensible Drug Policy).

WHO: Guru of Ganja Ed Rosenthal, glaucoma patient Brenda Kratovil, Americans for Safe Access, hemp activist Caren Thomas, and Illinois NORML director Bryan Brickner will participate in a discussion panel.

WHERE: Illini Union Ballroom will host the forum, and 311 Gregory Hall will host the Know Your Rights workshop.

WHEN: The forum will take place from 7-9 PM on Thursday, December 4th, and the workshop will take place from 7-8:30 PM on Wednesday, December 3rd.

International authority on marijuana Ed Rosenthal has over thirty years of experience as a cannabis expert, and he has applied his expertise to the cultivation of pharmaceutical grade cannabis for medical marijuana users in California, a practice he was arrested for in 2002, despite the fact that he had been deputized by the City of Oakland to distribute medical marijuana. Found guilty by a misinformed jury and convicted of three counts of cultivation and conspiracy, Rosenthal has attracted national attention for both his controversial trial and his activism. Joining Rosenthal in UIUC NORML/SSDP's medical marijuana forum will be Brenda Kratovil, a glaucoma patient from the Chicago area who was also arrested for growing marijuana for medical use in 2001. Illinois law does not ordain marijuana use for medical purposes, but Kratovil is working to change the laws with Illinois NORML director Bryan Brickner, a state leader working to revise drug policy. Brickner will also speak in the medical marijuana forum along with fellow Chicago activist Caren Thomas who also supports medical marijuana and commercial hemp. Two representatives from Americans for Safe Access, a grassroots group based in California working to end the anti-medical marijuana crusade, will round out the group of activists speaking in UIUC NORML/SSDP's forum of national leaders in medical marijuana reform. Americans for Safe Access will also present its nationally touring Know Your Rights workshop to educate communities across the nation about their rights and how to successfully interact with law enforcement. This momentous two day event will provide the Champaign-Urbana area with a chance to interact with activists on the leading edge of marijuana reform as well as the opportunity to learn about an issue of growing importance and controversy in America.